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**PLATFORM
of the
Portuguese
REVOLUTIONARY
COUNCILS**

& PRP (BR) MANIFESTO



**Proletarian text
No:1**

INTRODUCTION

The past two years have marked a turning point in the international class struggle. The final defeat of US imperialism in Indochina and the collapse of Portuguese colonialism in Africa have marked the exhaustion of the revolutionary national liberation movements, whilst the events in Portugal have marked the reawakening of the proletarian communist revolution.

According to the Marxist dialectical conception, the essence of counter-revolution consists in the propagation in a new situation of the slogans of a past revolutionary period. In the period of proletarian revolution the greatest counter-revolutionary danger comes to be presented by the parties of revolutionary democracy. This fundamental principal of communism, laid down by Marx in 1850, is amply illustrated by recent events. Five decades of counter revolution in Europe, during which the only politically progressive force in the world situation has seemed to be the democratic and nationalist movements of Asia and Africa, has given a little lustre to the slogans of revolutionary democracy. This has allowed various 'communist' and populist parties to bask in reflected glory and retain at least a threadbare progressive mantle. But a year of revolutionary development in Portugal has exposed such nationalist and democratic illusions.

The fundamental doctrines of revolutionary communism are being verified once again. Against all the revisionist theories of 'advanced democracy', 'peoples democracy' or 'socialist democracy', it is being revealed that the proletarian revolution takes the form of a revolution against democracy, for the establishment of the undivided dictatorial rule of the working class. The Socialist Party, the party of revolutionary democracy and representing the small and middle bourgeoisie, has become the front behind which the forces of international capital and the Portuguese exploiters mobilise to attack the proletarians.

In opposition to the bourgeois rights of universal suffrage it becomes clear once more that proletarian political power must rest upon exclusive organs of the proletarian class: the soviets or revolutionary workers councils.

Against the petit bourgeois pacifism peddled by the modern revisionists, with their talk of 'peaceful transitions', the Portuguese revolution has shown that the military question is at the heart of political power, and that without a workers army the workers have nothing. Each turning point in the revolution, each shift in political power from one class fraction to another has been dependent upon a test of military strength: 25 April, 28 September, 11 March. On this point, a certain lack of clarity may still have persisted this April to judge from one of the documents that we publish here, where it is not clear whether what is called for is the general arming of the proletariat or, on the other hand, a reforming of the existing bourgeois armed forces. (see document no 1, introduction).

In opposition to the romantic slogans on 'national liberation' raised by populist elements within and without the AFM, and calls for a 'battle for production' in the interests of the national economy it has become clear that these are nothing other than an attempt to restabilise Portuguese capitalism.

In opposition to the democratic petty bourgeoisie who wish to consolidate the revolution and achieve a 'democratic self managing socialism', (within which by some strange coincidence wage labour and private property are to survive), it becomes clear to revolutionary proletarians in Portugal that: it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent until all the more or less propertied classes have been driven from their ruling positions, until the proletariat has conquered state power and until the association of proletarians has progressed sufficiently far - not only in one country but in all of the leading countries of the world - that competition between the proletarians of these countries ceases and the decisive forces of production are concentrated in the hands of the workers. (Marx, Address of the Central Committee 1850)

THE TEXTS

If the proletariat is to rule it must assert itself as an independent class, acting in its own interests. To achieve its historic goals, the dictatorship of the proletariat and communism, it must be united by combination and guided by knowledge; by knowledge of scientific socialism, and by knowledge of the historic and international experience of the class war.

It is the policy of the Communist Organisation to attempt to fulfil this requirement to the best of its ability: a) by struggling to undertake and propagate concrete analyses of the economic political and ideological conditions of the class war, the results of which are published in our journal 'Proletarian', and in the 'Proletarian Pamphlets'; b) by publishing historical reprints that restore to the proletariat in Britain its patrimony; c) by making available translations of documents of the international proletarian struggle such as those contained in this pamphlet.

There are two texts included in this pamphlet: first the documents of the first Congress for Revolutionary Councils of Workers and Soldiers, held the 19th and 20th of April 1975 in Lisbon; second, the manifesto of the Proletariat Revolutionary Party -- Revolutionary Brigades, which though issued on the occasion of the elections to the constituent assembly is not an election manifesto but an anti election manifesto.

The bourgeois press has given what by its standards is a comprehensive coverage of recent Portuguese events, they have hung on the every word of the Heroes of Portuguese democracy such as Mario Soares and given us thumbnail sketches of the 'personalities behind the events'. But with typical bourgeois idiocy they remain blind to the events behind the personalities, so that when the proletarian masses of Portugal begin to organise themselves as a political force independent of the bourgeois parties their first congress could pass unreported. For us however it is not an event that can be allowed to pass unnoticed. For us any genuine mass construction of workers councils/commissions/soviets is of central importance. Our strategic advocacy centres around the need for the emergence of a true Marxist Leninist Communist Party able to give programmatic guidance to the workers councils as and when they appear. We adopted this position, (and with it the advocacy of industrial unionism to promote class economic unity) from appreciation of the historical reality that wherever the working class is in deep crisis - offensive or defensive - the inevitable and spontaneous form of this developing self awareness and autonomous action is always the workers council.

Without the mass catalysing and organising nodes of the councils no real social revolution can take place. But the very spontaneity of the conciliar movement is but the groundswell within which the scientific guidance of the party leads the proletariat towards seizing state power for the effecting of its dictatorship.

Our knowledge is not yet sufficient to say how far this view of the dialectical interaction between council and party is shared by the PRP. Their practice as evinced by these documents seem to indicate that it is, but in the texts themselves, this is nowhere made explicit. On the contrary, item 3 of the conclusions in the document of the Revolutionary Councils, which we presume to have been drafted under PRP influence, can be read as a caving in before the sheer spontaneous upsurge; "The existence of too many political groups within the class and their internecine fighting and attempts to control the class's autonomous organisations creates a division of the class and a general feeling of frustration with regard to political parties and the class's consequent need to create unitary organisations for the exercise of political power in the workplace, residential area and barracks."

This may just be a call for the principled unity of revolutionary organisations in

a real Communist Party (is definitely not the PCP). It also, correctly, may be an attempt to make clear to the 'parties' the qualitative distinction between council and party - that the former is the mass mobilising organ, whereas the latter is the compact organisation of vanguard communist elements only. A dialectical relation unites and polarises these qualitatively distinct entities (it is not a matter of the numbers that each embraces, but of the degree of consciousness and discipline obtained). The attempt to reduce one to the other will abort any potentially socialist revolution, and the outcome will be some kind of bourgeois revolution/counter-revolution.

It may lastly be the case that the PRP has conflated the role of party with that of the council, or at this stage they may just be learning from the revolutionary initiative of the masses which they (correctly) do not want to stifle. We obviously hope that such revolutionary modesty is their standpoint and not sheer conciliar spontaneism. Only time will clarify their effective position, and not much time either.

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REVOLUTIONARY COUNCILS of Workers, Soldiers and Sailors

The economic situation is one of grave crisis whose principal characteristics are unemployment and inflation. This crisis is not just part of the world crisis of capitalism; it is very deeply rooted in the particular characteristics of Portugese capitalism, which developed under the cover of a fascist regime almost totally dependant upon other countries. Increasing numbers of companies are going bankrupt, the investments which could create new jobs are not being made, inflation is not stopping, the balance of payments deficit is getting bigger and bleeding our reserves, the situation in the countryside is very serious and agricultural production is completely incapable of meeting our food needs.

Because of the big contradictions involved, the resolution of this crisis is only possible within the capitalist system under a repressive political regime. In the present political situation this signifies a return to fascist political reform. Stability cannot be achieved under bourgeois democracy.

In the absence of a radical solution the situation will inevitably become worse, with growing dependence on overseas whilst working class living conditions deteriorate markedly with resulting serious political consequences.

The economic contradictions can be resolved only under socialism, with working class in power, never under the anarchy of capitalist production with the bourgeoisie in control and maintaining all of its privileges and demanding increasing sacrifices from the working class.

Because of the factors which make socialist revolution possible the Portugese situation is becoming a major headache for imperialism on a world scale.

Imperialism is no longer interested in economic exploitation of Portugal, but in its strategic position, since it knows that a change here would bring nearer a change in Spain and a profound reversal in Europe, where France and Italy have revolutionary movements. That is why we believe there is a real danger not only of imperialism supporting internal reaction, but also of an imperialist intervention through its military wing NATO. And, faced by such an intervention the sole possibility of resistance lies in a whole people armed and mobilised to defend what is ours.

The main feature of the present political situation is the existence of big internal struggles determined by the interests of mutually antagonistic classes.

Within the Armed Forces there are reactionary men and progressive men, just as there are within the MFA. The plots hatched by the reactionaries after April 25 involved the backing and participation of some of the most reactionary men in the Armed Forces who, quite logically, were defending the interests of the class to which they belonged -- the bourgeoisie. As long as the present structure of the Armed Forces holds good they will always contain an element of support for reaction and imperialism which will make use of them for the unleashing of counter revolutionary coups.

The development of the revolutionary process must inevitably involve a radical change in the present military structures, transforming them into a popular force at the service of the Socialist Revolution.

CONCLUSIONS

1. It is obviously impossible for the just aspirations of the working class to be satisfied under the capitalist mode of production, and the same applies to the form of state capitalism, which is what some people are calling for and which doesn't even constitute a viable alternative and would rapidly degenerate into a repressive regime.
2. The reactionaries's constant threats and rumours, arising from the most varied sources; the failure to make a clean sweep of PIDE men, money-grubbers and legionaries, the bosses' lackeys and other reactionary agents, from the barracks and work-places, creates within the class a feeling of defencelessness and the need for the class to organise so as to move onto the offensive.
3. No matter what the result of the elections, they will not solve the class's basic problems.
4. The existence of too many political groups within the class and their inter-necine fighting and attempts to control the class's autonomous organisations creates a division of the class and a general feeling of frustration with political parties and of the class's consequent need to create unitary organisms for the exercise of political power in the workplace, residential area and barracks.
5. The organisation with which power is to be won and exercised must be constituted by organs which are elected by and arise from the class in its work centres, residential areas and barracks.
6. In the present situation there is an urgent need for the creation of revolutionary councils as the only means by which the proletariat can take power.
7. THE NEED FOR THE PROLETARIAT TO TAKE POWER IS URGENT

On April 20, 1975, the Congress approved a motion containing the following points:

1. Constitution of a 50 member Secretariat for the Revolutionary Councils of Workers, Soldiers and Sailors.
2. Congress elected the following elements:
11 engineering workers; 1 electronics worker; 1 cutter; 1 office worker; 1 teacher; 1 hotel trades employee; 1 printing worker; 1 unemployed person; 11 military personnel (privates and officers).
3. Besides the above the following will make up the secretariat:
2 delegates from the North; 1 for Viano do Castelo; 2 for Marinha Grande; 1 for Covilha; 2 for Alentejo and Algarve.
4. Parties and workers movements, the left of the Socialist party included, are invited to send a delegate to represent them on the Provisional National Secretariat.

The principal tasks of this Secretariat will be:

- a. Promotion of the election of Revolutionary Councils at general assemblies.
The linking of these new councils to the secretariat through delegates.
Propaganda for the Revolutionary Councils of Workers, Soldiers and Sailors.
The publishing of several of the congress's documents to corresponding bodies, whether party political or not.
The finding of a suitable headquarters.
- b. Holding periodical meetings to discuss and exchange experiences.
The establishment of a stable National Congress of the Revolutionary Councils of Workers, Soldiers and Sailors.

ALL DECISIONS TO BE APPROVED BY MAJORITY

*PLATFORM OF OBJECTIVES: approved by the Congress for
Revolutionary Councils*

WHEREAS

1. After March 11 it was proved that there was little or no class organisation to reply to a likely reactionary coup. It having been verified that after February 7 the workers commissions, restrictions having been placed on their economic powers, faced an impasse.
2. Considering the existence of the spectre of unemployment hanging over the workers and restraining their claims and considering that this enables the reformists to control some factories.
3. Considering that the reformists have taken control of some military and civic structures and they will be able to introduce reforms which at most will enable the situation to be stabilised in the short term though never in the medium or long term.
4. Considering that the military power is divided into three factions: right, left and undecided.
5. Whereas there exists a true political power which is in the hands of military personnel of the most varied political tendencies, ranging from the left to a right wing which could be reinforced by the "don't knows" of which large numbers exist in the armed forces.
7. Whereas imperialism is not prepared to lose the strategic site occupied by our country, nor to countenance the influence which the revolutionary process could have in the West European countries where the proletariat is more politically advanced.
8. Whereas the confrontation with imperialism necessitates the armed organisation of the class.
9. Whereas the organisation of the class arises from autonomous forms through unitary commissions elected at the base, within the class.
10. Whereas the Revolutionary Councils are neither opposed to nor a substitute for the workers' commissions, which have an economic role, and the Revolutionary Councils are a more directly political form for the seizure of power, they propose:

I-- IMMEDIATE TARGETS

1. Enlightenment of revolutionary militants among the workers and armed forces, as to the economic and military situation of our country.
2. Immediate election of Revolutionary Councils in all work places, military units, and residential areas.
3. Strengthening of links between revolutionary workers and soldiers.

II-- OBJECTIVES OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCILS

1. The urgent organisation and arming of the class so it can crush any reactionary coup, whether launched from inside or outwith the country, and organisation for the class's seizure and exercise of power.
2. The formation of a truly revolutionary army of the proletariat.
3. At the present stage account must be taken of the existence of several parties within which working class militants organise. The Revolutionary Workers Councils could begin to be the embryo of the true Revolutionary Party which would be the class's vanguard in the construction of socialism.
4. To take on step by step, the control of the administration, management and direction of the factories and rural work centres, and the command of military units. Every revolutionary council has to define the concrete objectives in its area.
5. The objectives of the Revolutionary Councils, once in power must be:
 1. Socialist planning of the economy as opposed to self-management and to state capitalism.

- 2. The Cultural Revolution.
- 3. A full social plan for the profound alteration of the economic, political and social structures, for the construction of the communist society through the dictatorship of the proletariat.

MANIFESTO of the PRP (BR)

INSTABILITY OF POLITICAL POWER

The days of the decisive confrontation of the bourgeoisie and proletariat are approaching. The PRP-BR have a name and a face for it -- insurrection.

The power of the bourgeoisie is being put to the test in the factories, the countryside, the streets, every minute. And invariably violence is seen as the means to be used by either side;-- on the one hand violence is seen as a necessary means by which the proletariat can gain power; for others violence is a means of oppression for keeping economic power in the hands of the bourgeoisie and for consolidating and toughening political power. This is because the political situation in Portugal is extremely unstable and has been for some time though it has got much worse in the last period.

Given the instability, the economic crisis, the strength and combativity of the working classes and the revolutionaries, the bourgeoisie is showing itself incapable of realising its class interests.

As a result of the instability we see scissions and the breakdown of political parties, the hurried forming of new parties to play a specific role in the electoral field and the reducing of relations among parties of the ruling coalition into an increasing clarification of lines and redefinition of positions in the field of party political formations.

Fear of losing power and ambitions of achieving it on the part of several political organisations are translated into various political manoeuvres of which some polls and demonstrations carried out or attempted on the question of unions are a clear example.

The problem of the unions was scarcely the detonator of the long latent crisis among the parties of the ruling coalition. Before that there was the growth of big mutual recriminations, manoeuvring and counter-manoevring. In this crisis among the coalition parties the PCP, has always, stood out because of its rampant sectarianism and tremendous capacity for manoeuvring, in which it has frequent recourse to its pawns in the political chess game, the MDP-CDE, MES and Intersindical.

On the other hand, the PPD and the PS in fighting the PC do so not because they refuse to accept the dictatorship of one group (they would accept the dictatorship of the fraction or fractions to which they belong), but because of the rabid anti-communism of which they are an instrument. The liberties and rights to which these bourgeois parties constantly refer are the liberties and rights of the capitalists to continue the exploitation and oppression of the workers.

The great anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist demonstration of 7 February settled accounts by a major working class and revolutionary victory over the bourgeoisie and the reformists. The latter tried by a variety of means to block this autonomous workers demonstration: their tactics ranged from wild slanders and accusations to a ban decreed by the Civil Governor of Lisbon. But the workers determination held firm and the demonstration went ahead.

The proletarian discipline of the demonstrators, the absence of repression by

the military and para-military forces, the obvious solidarity of workers and soldiers showed that a new power is being forged, and that the time has come for the forming of a revolutionary alternative.

The presence of workers, revolutionaries and soldiers joined as brothers in the same anti-capitalist, anti-reformist demonstration, realising in practice the concrete expression of the necessary conjugation between these now indissoluble forces will go down in Portuguese history: these were workers, revolutionary organisations and revolutionary soldiers and officers. Furthermore, with the existence of several powers which in some cases cancel each other out, with a government which fails to govern we face a situation of political impasse which cannot last for long. Since the situation of political impasse is of no use to the bourgeoisie it is getting ready to launch a coup (either a military or a constitutional one). If the working classes, the revolutionary organisations and the revolutionary soldiers, sailors and officers fail to organise and join forces quickly there will be a very serious danger of a return to fascism.

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CRISIS

The instability of political power is closely linked to the profound economic crisis in the capitalist system in Portugal, which in turn is part of the general crisis of capitalism on a world scale.

As we did before April 25 we are continuing to state (and it is becoming increasingly obvious) that the economic, political and social crisis racking capitalism in Portugal was of such a magnitude that there was no hope of the stabilisation of bourgeois democracy in Portugal. A social-democratic solution is not possible because this country is almost totally dependant and without resources.

The crisis which capitalism was undergoing before April 25 has got worse rather than better. And this despite (one might almost say contrary to) the intentions of many of the authors of April 25, who wanted to save capitalism and reform it.

Company closures and rundowns have stepped up in recent months, and many thousands of workers have been sacked as a result. Imperialism is trying every trick as are the Portuguese capitalists used to decades of certain forms of exploitation and oppression of the workers. This was to be expected, of course, because they know that they are losing ground. But not everything is a question of tricks or economic sabotage as some call it, seemingly unaware of the laws of the capitalist system and revealing a complete lack of analysis when faced with the normal process of concentration and centralisation of capital. Investment capacity is falling because Portuguese and overseas investors do not consider the situation to be a favourable one and fear the loss of their profits and investments. For the same reason there has been a major flight of investment to overseas markets and companies are short of credits. Capital goes wherever it bears fruit -- this is the law of capitalist society.

Internal production of foodstuffs is increasingly insufficient to meet the needs of the population; instead reliance has to be placed on the world market for certain products which cost us thousands of millions.

There is a marked worsening of the deficit on the balance of payments, caused, above all by the growth of food imports, by difficulties encountered in placing certain Portuguese products in the world markets and by the fall in returns from tourism.

With the end of colonial exploitation the cost of living will get worse, as some prices -- of which sugar is the most obvious example -- already indicate. The sources of cheap raw-materials are at an end as are the obligatory purchases by the colonies (no matter the quality of Portuguese products). The consequences of